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ABSTRACT

American Indian tribes are rapidly recognizing the value of libraries. Along with the tribes, individuals and organizations are also recognizing that libraries and the information services which they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. The organization, staffing, and programming for Indian library services, while basically similar to library services everywhere, involve certain special problems and unique situations. This booklet, third in a series of guides designed to provide initial direction and alternatives to those planning or developing Indian library and information systems, discusses some basic considerations in library governance, interrelationships with governmental units, and staff considerations. The following terms are defined: library structure, library board, staff organization, and library program. Seventeen sources for further reading are also cited. (NQ)

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Staffing for Indian Library Services



by

Margaret Wood

Guide Number 3

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PREFACE

Libraries and information centers are rapidly becoming an integral part of Indian life. Individuals, organizations, and tribes have come to the decision that libraries and the information services that they offer are necessary to meet Indian goals. These goals may vary widely, from improved access to education, cultural information, information on available social services, to leisure reading. They are all based in a component or institution designed to process information - a library.

As yet, only limited resources are available to meet this fast growing demand. Funding must usually be garnered from other programs. Professionally qualified Indian librarians and trained Indian technicians are in critically short supply. Books and other informational resources still contain racist information. Experience in developing programs and services which meet the local community's needs is slight. Specific sensitivity to Indian ways and alternatives is just developing as library and information services develop in Indian communities.

The purpose of these guides is to provide initial direction and provide alternatives to those planning or engaged in developing Indian library and information systems. Each guide discusses basic policies, initial steps, or discreet activities that appear to be essential to successful Indian library service. Each guide gives the reader basic direction and alternatives for development in his locale.

The reader is strongly advised to recognize these guides for what they are - ideas and programs that have been successful in the communities where they are used. They will not solve all the problems of Indian library service. They will provide the reader with some ideas, programs, and concepts to be considered in light of informational needs in the specific Indian community to be served.

Three basic types of information are presented in the guides: societal coping skills, basic considerations for implementation; and descriptions of services unique or critical to Indian libraries. These guides are supplemented by the Appalachian Adult Education Center's, Library Service Guides. The excellent Appalachian guides deal primarily with services in small communities.

Coping skills are given in two guides, (#'s 1 and 2). Organization and implementation will be discussed in five of the guides (#0,3,9,10, & 11) which cover: funding, organization, assessing needs, materials selection, and training. Five guides will discuss services unique or critical to Indian Library Service (#4,5,6,7, & 8). These guides cover: cataloging, urban services, adult education, program elements, and information services.

Charles Townley, Editor

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Initial Organization and Staffing Patterns for Indian Library Services

Margaret Wood

Guide 3

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I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Library Structure. The legal and financial basis for the establishment and operation of a library constitutes its structure.

Library Board. The library board also known as a board of library trustees is a panel of lay community people whose main role is to set policy suited to the community served, to try to obtain the best librarian and library services it can afford and to interpret the library's functions, needs and objectives to the community.

Staff Organization. The staff organization is a system of delegating tasks and responsibilities among a staff so everyone is responsible to someone in a higher position, for certain assigned work.

Library Program. The library program consists of the activities carried out in a library necessary to achieve the main objective of disseminating information and promoting education among all the people of the community.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organization, staffing and programming for Indian library services while basically similar to library service everywhere involves certain special problems and unique situations. Indian tribes are currently recognizing the value of libraries and hence numerous groups are interested in starting them. However, the tribal legal and financial regulations concerning libraries on reservations are either vague or nonexistent. In urban areas, small groups of Indians are neatly labeled "minority" and too often their unique cultural and social interests and needs go unnoticed. In brand new small libraries there are the important questions of how to best use limited funds to hire top people and offer a good library program. In this booklet, basics of these three phases of library work will be touched upon and where possible, suggestions for dealing with Indian communities and libraries are included.

III. STEPS OF ORGANIZATION

Once the decision to start a library has gained sufficient backing, it will be necessary to decide which of the numerous possible library structures is best for the community. It is possible to label libraries as independent, semi-independent or dependent. As applied to Indian libraries, these labels pertain to financing. A dependent library is one in which the source of funding is definite and closely related to the administration of the library. One example of this is the Rough Rock Demonstration School Library where policy of the library is determined by the School Board and all funding for the library comes through the

the school budget. A semi-independent library is one in which part of the funding comes from a committed source but the library is free to solicit additional funds from other sources. The independent library is one which has no long-term committed source of funding but receives support from numerous sources as it finds them. Most Indian community libraries tend to be independent because funding sources for libraries are scarce and there is usually no tax base or rate for the budget as with most city, county and state libraries.

All three types of Indian libraries are governed by or heavily influenced by the Indian community or tribal government where they are established. There are any number of ways to combine types of administration with funding categories.

Incorporation is another factor in determining the library structure. Incorporation involves submitting application forms to the state or federal government or both in order to receive authorized non-profit educational institution status. One advantage of an incorporated library is that it is more likely to receive donations because they are deductible from state or federal income tax or both depending on which incorporation process the library went through. Also, private foundations are more likely to extend grants to incorporated libraries because the incorporation label establishes and better defines their status and worthiness. Going through the incorporation process is not easy and achieving that status enhances the reputation of the library.

Incorporation is also one way to circumvent the lack of tribal government library laws. The incorporation status helps define the library as a non-profit educational institution. Also since almost all states require incorporation of their public libraries, this status for the tribal community library brings it closer to becoming a public library. The definition of public library is determined by the state laws and once the public library definition and requirements are met, that library is entitled to state funding. Also, for the above reason, it is better for the library itself to be incorporated rather than share its higher administrative body's incorporated status. For example, the community library might be part of a tribal education committee or department which has the incorporated status.

Laws for libraries and incorporation vary from state to state and the state library, usually located in the state capital can provide detailed information on these. Also the state library can help in other ways including sending consultants to meet with the library formation committee to help with planning and later to help initiate service.

If a tribe has limited funds, it may elect to contract library services with a library, usually the county or state library. This eliminates many costs but does not guarantee good service because services, materials and goals come mostly from an outside source. Also, there is nothing permanent from the

expenditure since this is a rental, not a purchasing agreement.

On some Indian reservations, there may be laws in the tribal constitution or tribal legal code concerning the establishing and operation of libraries in the community. More than likely there will be no laws and before a library can be established a formal resolution will have to be presented to and passed by the tribal government. To determine what basic items should be covered in the law, library laws in other states should be studied and the state library can help with information and guidance. It may be possible that laws concerning education can be interpreted to apply to community library service.

In non-reservation, heavily Indian population centers, or in Indian populated urban areas, the laws of the state and city or town will apply.

If, when starting a community library, the option of being totally independent or joining an existing library system arises, there are more benefits in joining a system. Units may vary from state to state but it may be a county system or a group of adjoining counties forming a regional system. System members retain individuality while benefitting by sharing specialists, materials, experience and saving money in the process. The state library can provide information regarding existing systems and how to join.

Occasionally, legal problems arise when county or state libraries extend substantial aid outside their jurisdictions. This is especially true when communities on the reservation are in counties but county services do not ordinarily extend onto reservation land. One instance of this type of conflict is described in the American Libraries article entitled "Library Service Dispute".

It is highly conceivable that the library structure can change. For example, a community group might start a small community library by donations and aid from the state library. As the use grows and its importance in the community as an educational, recreational and social factor become more evident, the tribal government could be convinced to pass library laws, and include the financial responsibilities in the tribal budget. Dean Welsh's article entitled "Colorado River Tribes Public Library First in the Nation" explains how it can happen.

Large Indian communities within the legal boundaries of a city with a large public library system may find it easiest to try to get a branch library started in their area. Often library administrators are aware of but highly frustrated with trying to reach minority groups. The library may be willing to hire a liaison between the library and the Indian community. The liaison would promote planning and the Indian input would be desired and listened to. One possible outcome would be a branch library centrally located and devoted to serving the Indian community. The Cunningham article entitled "The Changing Environment and

Changing Institution: Indian Project to the Northeast Kansas Library System" explains how this worked in Kansas.

Though a branch library may not be feasible, some public library systems may be willing to help start a small Indian library in the urban Indian center or any Indian owned or controlled building. A room or corner of a room could be designated the Library and be manned either by a library worker or Indian center employee. The collection might include general reading and books on Indians or anything the Indian input group desired. Ties to the main public library would be strong so special needs could be easily and quickly filled.

One other alternative is to locate the community library in the public school. Some advantages are partial elimination of duplication of staff and the materials collection. Certainly, the cost of building or renting a separate building is saved.

Many communities, especially small ones have and are doing this. The balance of service and sharing of financing can be worked out between community members and the school board. For example, a volunteer group may have books but no room and the school board may allow use of a room in return for library service to the students and staff. Occasionally, school boards interested in meeting accreditation requirements have asked public libraries to establish branches in public schools.

Though this arrangement seems to have more popularity in rural areas, it is possible that it would work in an urban area.

One disadvantage may be that the library program is hard put to service youngsters working within a static program while trying to meet the needs of pre-schoolers and adults who want and need different help and materials.

The Library Board

There are advantages and disadvantages to having a library board. One major function of the board is input. Also the board has influence and can back or present proposals favoring the library to the higher administrative body. The board can also act as a check for the larger governmental structure against waste or the poor management of the library department.

The board may be appointed by the tribal council or the librarian, elected by the public or formed by other means. The way in which the board is formed usually determines whether it is administrative or advisory. Boards usually consist of from five to seven members and the first appointments are for irregular terms so the terms of only one or two will expire at once. Details such as the above should be included in the library laws.

Generally, the board is legally responsible for hiring the librarian and for establishing the policies of employment and of

the library's program. The board is financially responsible for the library budget. After the librarian is hired, he and the board plan and work together towards maintaining a good program within the budget. Generally the detailed internal administration of the library is handled solely by the librarian while the board concerns itself mainly with general library policy. If the librarian is hired by a central personnel office it is likely the library board is more advisory than administrative.

If poorly chosen or if conflicts are allowed to develop, the board and the librarian may be at constant odds with little progress or change being made. It is the dual responsibility of librarian and board to carry out their responsibilities well and respect the other.

Although an administrative board may have already been formed to hire the librarian and start the library, if a vacancy occurs, the librarian and remaining board members can suggest a possible replacement. It is important to try to select a concerned citizen who is respected in the community and who represents a definite faction of the community. Especially on Indian reservations where the communities consist of such diverse groups as older, non-English speaking citizens, numerous students, professional non-Indians working for the tribal government and others, it is important to have each group represented.

Though the board members may have all qualifications except a good knowledge of libraries, there are many ways to help educate trustees in the library field. Often the state library will have consultants capable of putting on a workshop for trustees. Field trips can be arranged so they can visit other libraries and speak with other librarians. Professional literature should be made available to them and they should join national and state library or special trustee associations and attend their meetings and conferences.

To help with the smooth running of the library board system by-laws should be established and followed. By-laws should cover dates, times and frequency of meetings as well as establishment of a quorum, procedure on special or called meetings of the board, appointment of special committees and amendments to the by-laws.

IV. DEVELOPING A STAFF ORGANIZATION

Though basic staffing and personnel guidelines will generally apply to Indian community libraries, there is some special information that may help.

Probably the first question to be dealt with is the number of staff members and the proportion of professionals to non-professionals. Duties of professionals include conducting library activities which depend upon a general body of knowledge and skills, and involve decision making and using judgment, communicating knowledge and ideas and working with the public in an

official capacity. Nonprofessionals, by contrast do repetitive procedures and activities such as typing, shelving, lettering and operating equipment.

Library standards and interim standards have been developed by the American Library Association and will give ideal numbers of staff based on area served and population involved. Although finances will probably not allow suggested staff at first, the suggested numbers can be used as a guide and act as goals for later development and growth.

It has been the case until recently that since only non-Indians had library degrees, they were hired in administrative and higher positions while Indians worked in lower positions. Recently, as more Indians have earned library degrees, the trend is to exclude non-Indians from consideration for higher positions. However, the practices of general interviewing and evaluation of potential employees should be followed. If seemingly well-trained, intelligent and personable Indians are available, and if it appears they can do a good job, they should be given preference. If the Indian applicant has an unusual past employment record (switching jobs three times a year) seems to be antagonistic, is not really well-trained or otherwise appears to be handicapped when considering the large responsibilities of the job, it would be ridiculous to hire him solely on the basis of Indianness, instead of an Anglo with good qualifications who will contribute to the development of the library and is personable and able to communicate and to establish rapport with all people.

Most of the literature on library service to Indians has included suggestions about staffing and a common one is that some staff members be of the tribe being served. Most Indian libraries do include Indian staff though they are usually in non-professional positions. Ideally, the majority of the staff would be of the same tribe and the positions held would be professional as well as non-professional.

In recent years, more and more professional Indian librarians have been graduated and are available for hire. If no tribe members are available for hire, Indians of any tribe might be considered. Although there are still definite tribal identities, there is a basic commonality among American Indians and the Indian staff member is likely to have more rapport than an Anglo. At the same time, in the past few decades, with migration to large cities and with relocation programs, having Indian blood no longer means all Indians have the same tribal and cultural identity. Certainly, it might be better to hire as head librarian, an Anglo who had several years experience working with Indians or on a reservation, who was personable and well-trained instead of hiring a young, inexperienced Indian who had never set foot on the reservation.

In small libraries where there are limited funds, it is tempting to hire someone with some library experience for a low

salary instead of a professional librarian who demands several thousand dollars more salary. It is definitely important to hire well-trained librarians and in the long run more economical. If special people are being served and special, non-conventional programs are needed, the professional knows the philosophy of library service and will have had more exposure to what is possible. A good, strong basis which can be built upon is needed and only the most exceptional and very rare non-professional, un-trained person can conceive of the basis needed.

At the top of the library personnel structure is the head librarian or director of library services. The responsibilities of this position include defining the objectives of the library, formulating and administering policies, rules and regulations, making and administering the budget, hiring, training and supervising staff, doing surveys and studies, planning for the future and engaging in public relations activities.

In hiring non-professionals, it is advisable that younger people who can possibly be influenced into going on in the library field be searched for. Where some people may not want to or for some reason are unable to earn a bachelor's and master's degree, other levels of training are possible. With part-time study and training, workers can gain the titles of library technician and library paraprofessional. With the added training and new title, higher salaries are justified. Another advantage for the worker is that these titles and the levels of training are being standardized nationwide and switching from job to job is easier and maintaining a salary level is almost automatic.

Though the majority of library staff members today are women, the possibility of hiring a male in any position should be considered. The incidence of homes without fathers is high among Indians and children, especially boys, gravitate towards males. Besides attracting more users, male employees will be providing much needed role models.

Alice Wright's book on Library Clerical Workers and Pages gives concise, detailed information on hiring, training and administering non-professional library workers.

V. DEVELOPING A PROGRAM

The program of all libraries should be non-static and ever-changing. Activities to disseminate information and promote education among all the community members will change as the community changes.

The activities which are common to all libraries have to do with (1) administering the library, (2) building the collection, (3) making it accessible for use, and (4) serving the users. The number and variety of these activities and the ways of performing them will vary according to the size, purpose and clientele of the library, the adequacy of financial support and the avail-

ability of personnel.

When starting a program, it will be easiest and safest to start with the more conventional library services. Some of these include building a materials collection, circulating printed material, making study and reading space available, and offering some type of information service.

It is useless to offer service that are not in demand or ones that will not be used. The money expended to develop special programs and special collections is wasted if users have no need for them. For example, it is currently the rage of libraries to replace old issues of magazines with microfilm copies instead of binding them and trying to keep them from being stolen or mutilated as well as finding space for the heavy bulky bound volumes. Where there is a large demand for magazines, the cost is easily justified. However, it would be useless to expend thousands of dollars for microfilm of magazines if only a dozen or so patrons read only the current magazines the library receives, much less the old issues. In time, when more students begin to use the library and learn to use guides to periodical literature and start doing research in the library, the large investment is justified. For the present, it might be best to use the money to purchase more Indian magazine subscriptions and more Indian book titles or films in order to draw people in and interest them in reading much less doing research.

For a new library which will undoubtedly be starting with a fairly small collection of materials, good relations and communications with other libraries is essential. If the library has started as part of a library system, the communications and interlibrary cooperation procedures will already be established. If not, it will be another duty of the librarian to establish these with other libraries. As mentioned before, the state library should be one of the first contacted. Besides helping with establishing and planning a new library, it can usually offer aid in loaning book collections to the library, help in answering some reference questions and help by loaning specific books needed by a patron but not owned by the small library. Again consultants who can help with such things as in-service training, how to start new services and how to speed up processing and others, will probably be made available at little or no cost to the library.

For reasons of expediency and later more mutual aid, it is essential to contact libraries in the immediate area. With the loan of books or information needed, it might save days if you can get it from a library in a nearby town instead of having to wait for it to arrive from the state library hundreds of miles away. The librarians can exchange ideas and experiences concerning users who are bound to be somewhat similar because of the similar geographic location. Most library policies and librarians advocate cooperation and it is rare that a plea for help goes unanswered.

In order to achieve progress and also in order to record it, it is advisable to set goals to be met. It is possible to exist and even prosper without written goals but generally the rate of progress will improve if goals and time limits are set. In order to justify financial expenditures and demands it is almost necessary to be able to say we progressed from point A to point B in this specific amount of time. These figures help board members and revenue committees make decisions. Goals and time limits also help library staff realize that with all that work and effort and time something definite was achieved.

Goals are essentially set by the community either directly or indirectly. A library board member or a member or group of community members may call attention to a useful new service or the need to expand an existing service. Indirectly, nothing vocal will happen but the growing use of some materials or a service will be noted by the library staff and called to the attention of the librarian. Careful scrutiny might reveal that use has positively increased or a new need should be filled before it becomes crucial or the lack of the filled needs discourages users and one avenue of helping and encouraging use fades.

The library board is the primary source of community input concerning the library program and services offered. Informal community input may come from individual users' comments or groups who approach the librarian or board. Often little informal input will come and it will be necessary to search out possible sources of input.

The librarian should have contacts with the community through such agencies as schools, the tribal council, the U.S. Employment Service, churches, welfare agencies, day care centers, youth groups and others. Input can come from the head of the community agency who sees a need among his group or the librarian might be invited to lecture at certain group meetings and encourage use and suggestions in that way.

With all of the special groups in any community there will be special interests and demands. If not checked, the library program will become watered down, diffused and ineffective. There may be so many small programs and special services that with limited finances and staff, no one gets good service but everyone gets partial and inferior service. It is important to define and rank priorities and stick to them while helping smaller groups and providing for special interests as much as possible.

The ranking of priorities of the library services will depend upon what the library is doing already, what needs to be done and what it can afford to do.

Defining priorities usually means trying to serve the majority best. In a community where a referral service to help large numbers of non-English speaking citizens find the correct agency for their needs is essential, time and money are justifiably spent in helping them. However, the librarian and library board

may with substantial reason, decide to make helping all school children an equal priority. The reason is a preventative one because helping students improve their reading skills, enjoy learning and decrease drop-outs will help eliminate the perpetuation of older, non-English speaking and reading adults.

Since the birth rate of most Indian groups has been high in recent years, the proportionate number of young people to older people is high. Most libraries in Indian communities find the numbers of students and student users are high so many make helping them a priority activity.

Also in recent years, the emphasis on adult education has increased and the number of adults learning to read and earning high school diplomas is increasing. Special high-interest, low vocabulary reading materials and specially trained staff are necessary to help adults learn to read. Whatever priorities are set will depend on the capabilities of the library and the needs of the community.

VI. WRITING AN OPERATIONAL PLAN

With the large number of activities being carried on in the library, it is advisable that a written plan be compiled to help keep things running smoothly. This written plan may also be called a policy or procedure manual and is possible more useful if divided into two parts. One part should explain all existing library activities while the other part should pertain to the goals, their implementation and time limits.

Once the library is operating, it is important that existing policies be consistent. Even while the library is in the planning stages, a brief tentative operational plan will help implementation. Though there will always be special circumstances that warrant special treatment and procedure, it is best to have established procedures for recurring situations. A loose-leaf notebook should be used so that portions can easily be changed. Chapters or sections may include general objectives, book selection, circulation procedure, personnel (recruitment, hiring, advancement, salary, dismissal, leave, retirement), working conditions, technical processing, relationships with other libraries, trustee or board--librarian relationships and miscellaneous. Ruth White's book entitled, Public Library Policies--General and Specific, is excellent for suggesting possible divisions and showing examples of different libraries' treatment of policies.

Since the library board is the policy making organ, all items in the operational plan will be approved by them. As changes are needed, they are proposed to the board, voted on and the printed manuals are changed accordingly. Each member of the board should have a copy of the operational manual and copies should be easily accessible to all staff members.

Implementation of the whole library operation or of a sin-

gle new program depends on a number of factors. Planning is needed, money must be secured, materials selected, purchased and processed, and staff must be trained. Certainly it is unwise to offer an underdeveloped program. At the same time, there comes a point when more talk, planning and assuming will do absolutely no good and only a trial run will ascertain whether or not the library or program is a success. Maybe the trial run proves it a partial success and compensations and changes here and there make it more of the useful and needed service planned for.

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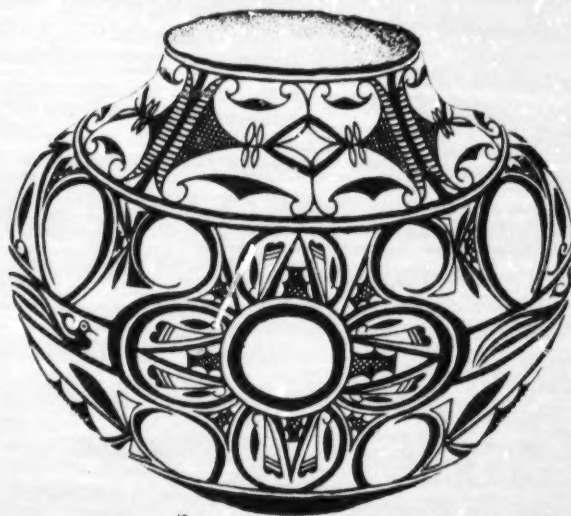
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